

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

What is claimed is:

Claims 1-30: Please delete.

31. (Currently Amended) An object tracking and control system comprising:

a. a storage unit **defining an enclosed, internal space therein, said storage unit capable of being opened to access said internal space;**

b. a plurality of receptacles defined within said enclosed, internal space, said receptacles disposed for receiving a plurality of trackable objects;

c.b. a plurality of trackable objects removably insertable into said ~~storage unit~~ receptacles without opening said storage unit;

d.e. a central controller remotely located from said storage unit.

32. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 31, further comprising a communications link between said storage unit and said central controller.

33. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 32, wherein said communications link is a network connection.

34. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 32, wherein said communications link is a wireless connection.

35. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 34, wherein said communications link is a wireless LAN connection.

36. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 33, wherein said network connection is the Internet.
38. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 33, wherein said network connection is a LAN.
39. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 32, further comprising a plurality of storage units.
40. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 31, wherein said storage unit further comprises a local controller.
41. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 40, wherein said local controller is located in said storage unit.
42. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 40, wherein said local controller is remotely located from said storage unit and remotely located from said central controller.
43. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 40, wherein said local controller has a network connection.
44. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 40, wherein said storage unit further comprises a wireless communications device.
45. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 40, wherein said local controller is in communication with said central controller via the communications link.
46. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 40, wherein said central controller is a control computer.
47. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 46, wherein said local controller is a local computer.

48. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 31, wherein said storage unit comprises a storage cabinet.
49. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 31, wherein each of said trackable objects is associated with an asset to be tracked.
50. (Currently Amended) An object tracking and control system comprising:
- a. a plurality of trackable objects, each trackable object having an upper portion and a lower portion;
 - b. a storage unit for receiving and storing said trackable objects, said storage unit having an array of sockets **individually defined within the storage unit in the same plane**, each socket configured to receive the lower portion of a trackable object;
 - c. said storage unit further having a local controller in electrical communication with said sockets;
 - d. a central computer remotely located from said storage unit; and
 - e. a communications link between said local controller and said central computer.
51. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 50, wherein said communications link is the Internet.
52. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 50, wherein said communications link is a LAN.
53. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 50, further comprising at least two storage units, wherein each of said storage units is remotely located from each other and from said central computer.
54. (Currently Amended) An object tracking and control system comprising:

one or more storage units for receiving a **plurality of tangible objects detached from said storage unit, each storage unit having an array of adjacent sockets fixed relative to one another, each socket disposed to receive a detached tangible object;**
and

a controller system coupled to a communication medium, wherein the controller system stores information regarding **receipt of a detached object seated in a socket or complete removal of a seated, detached object from a socket** ~~tangible object transactions between the storage units and the tangible objects in the object tracking and control system~~ and allows the object tracking and control system to be accessed remotely via the communication medium.

55. (Currently Amended) An object tracking and control system comprising:

a. a storage unit for receiving a plurality of trackable objects, **said storage unit having a storage compartment defined inside the storage unit, said storage compartment having an array of adjacent, fixed slots disposed therein;**

b. a plurality of **detached,** trackable objects removably insertable into said **fixed slots of said internally defined storage compartment** ~~storage unit;~~

c. a central computer remotely located from said storage unit;

d. a communications link between said storage unit and said central computer,
wherein said communications link is the Internet.

56. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 55, further comprising a security system in network communication with the central computer.

57. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 55, further comprising an inventory system in network communication with the central computer.

58. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 55, further comprising an accounting system in network communication with the central computer.
59. (Currently Amended) A method for managing objects, said method comprising the steps of
- a. providing a storage unit **having an array of adjacent sockets fixed relative to one another defined within said storage unit;**
 - b. **providing** with a plurality of trackable objects, **each object** ~~removably stored~~ **detachably seated within a socket**~~therein;~~
 - b. providing a central controller remotely located from said storage unit;
 - e. linking the storage unit to the central controller via a network; and
 - d. utilizing said central controller to remotely monitor transactions between the storage unit and **detached,** ~~the~~ trackable objects.
60. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, further comprising the steps of
- a. providing at least two storage units, each with a plurality of trackable objects removably stored therein;
 - b. remotely locating said at least two storage units apart from one another;
 - c. linking each storage unit to the central controller via a network; and
 - d. utilizing said central controller to aggregate information from each of said storage units.
61. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, further comprising the steps of
- a. providing a monitoring computer in communication with said central controller via a network; and

- b. transmitting information about the presence of trackable objects in a storage unit to the monitoring computer via the network.
62. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 61, wherein the step of transmitting comprises the step of transmitting an alarm to the monitoring computer based on the unauthorized removal of an object from a storage unit.
63. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 61, wherein the step of transmitting comprises the step of transmitting an alarm to the monitoring computer based on the unauthorized tampering of an object within the storage unit.
64. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, wherein the step of linking is accomplished using the Internet.
65. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, wherein the step of linking is accomplished using a LAN.
66. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 64, further comprising the step of communicating with the storage unit via the Internet.
67. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, wherein the step of linking is accomplished by a wireless communication link.
68. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, further comprising the step of transmitting an alarm from a storage unit to the central controller via the communications link based on unauthorized removal of an object from the storage unit.
69. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, further comprising the step of transmitting an alarm from a storage unit to the central controller via the communications link based on unauthorized tampering with an object associated with the storage unit.

70. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 59, further comprising the step of transmitting an alarm from a storage unit to the central controller via the communications link based on unauthorized tampering with the storage unit.
71. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 64, further comprising the steps of
- a. providing an inventory system in network communication with the central computer; and
 - b. transmitting trackable object inventory information from the central computer to the inventory system via the network.
72. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 64, further comprising the steps of
- a. providing an accounting system in network communication with the central computer; and
 - b. transmitting trackable object billing information from the central computer to the accounting system via the network.
73. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 64, further comprising the steps of
- a. providing a security system in network communication with the central computer; and
 - b. transmitting trackable object security information from the central computer to the security system via the network.
74. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 64 further comprising the step of activating an alarm at the storage unit based on a monitored transaction.
75. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 71, wherein the step of transmitting via a network is accomplished using the Internet.

76. (Currently Amended) A method for managing objects, said method comprising the steps of
- providing an object tracking and control system with one or more storage units **disposed** for receiving a **plurality of** tangible objects **detached from said storage unit, each storage unit having an array of adjacent sockets fixed relative to one another, each socket disposed to receive a detached tangible object;** and
- providing** a controller system coupled to a communication medium;
- storing information regarding **receipt of a detached object seated in a socket or complete removal of a seated, detached object from a socket** ~~tangible object~~ ~~transactions between the storage units and the tangible objects~~; and allowing the object tracking and control system to be accessed remotely via the communication medium.

ARGUMENT

Claims 31-76 remain in the application. Only independent Claims 31, 50, 54, 55, 59 and 76 have been amended.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 31-76 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Frederick (USP 6,788,997). Applicant traverses this rejection on the grounds that the reference does not teach each and every limitation of the amended claims.

Frederick teaches a standard filing cabinet with drawers 620 therein that slide on guides 574 carried by brackets 566. The system is disposed to detect when a drawer is opened. The Examiner has taken an expansive reading of the reference in equating (i) the filing cabinet drawers with the

“trackable objects” of applicant’s claims, (ii) the brackets with the “sockets” of applicant’s claims and (iii) the opening/closing of a drawer with the removal of a trackable object from the storage unit.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the storage unit is **enclosed** and that the receptacles into which trackable objects can be seated are not only **fixed**, but also **inside** the storage unit. And that the trackable objects can be removed from a receptacle **without opening** the storage unit to access the internal space in which the receptacles are fixed. In contrast, the filing cabinet drawer of the reference forms a part of the storage cabinet itself. Thus, the drawer cannot be opened without opening the storage cabinet and hence, the object cannot be “removed” from the unit without opening the filing cabinet (Applicant further asserts that “removal” as defined by applicant means complete extraction of trackable object from a slot, wherein the meaning of “removal” under the Examiner’s interpretation is a simple opening of the filing cabinet drawer, which would more appropriately be equated as “partial” removal.) The claim as amended clarifies the relationship of the physical elements of the invention and distinguishes the claim elements over the reference.

In Claims 50, 54, 55, 59 and 76, the claims have been amended to clarify that the trackable object **is not mounted or otherwise attached** to or within the storage unit. Clearly, the filing cabinet drawer is attached to the filing cabinet because it is slidingly mounted in the guides 574. The reference does not teach or suggest tracking complete removal of the drawer from the filing cabinet. In contrast, the trackable objects of the instant application is something that is **completely removed** from the storage unit, i.e., completely separated or detached from the storage unit as part of the systems overall functionality. To the extent a drawer remains mounted on a guide (which it always is), the drawer is not completely removed from its socket but is at best only “partially removed.” In

this regard, even the unamended claims are distinguishable based on the meaning of “removal” or “removably insertable” as taught by Applicant.

While the Applicant believes that equating the functionality of a filing cabinet with a system for tracking the removal and storage of objects in a secure container is equivalent in structure or function, the amendments to the claims further clarify and distinguish the applicant’s system from the cited reference. For this reason, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the refusal and pass the claims to allowance.



If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful to the allowance of this application, a telephone conference is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
JACKSON WALKER L.L.P.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark A. Tidwell", written over a horizontal line.

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

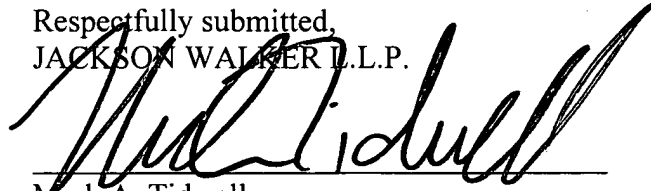
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Date: February 21, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margie Turner", written over a horizontal line.
Margie Turner

If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful to the allowance of this application, a telephone conference is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Renee Treider